



*A Century of Service*

# 羅省同源會 Chinese American Citizens Alliance

*(Organized May 11, 1895)*

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## VIA EMAIL ONLY

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History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee,  
Instructional Quality Commission,  
California State Board of Education

To Whom It May Concern:

After reviewing the current draft of the California Social Studies Framework, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance would like to offer suggestions for improvement. In previous frameworks, the history of the Chinese in America has been largely omitted. Usually, the only reference to that history is a discussion of their coming to California during the Gold Rush and their role in building the railroads in the West. Instead, the new Framework must do more to reflect the fact that Chinese Americans despite facing many obstacles have been an integral part of the history of the United States. Chinese Americans have contributed to America as builders and farmers, as inventors and entrepreneurs, as scholars and artists, as soldiers and civic leaders; the perception of our engagement needs to be expanded.

In the Third grade curriculum which focuses on the students' local communities, teachers must know their area's history. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. For example, many L.A. teachers do not realize that "Old Chinatown" was located in downtown Los Angeles at the site of the current transit hub, Union Station. Therefore, the Framework should include a resource reference materials list for areas throughout the state.

Fourth grade students learn about California history. The superficial treatment of the role of the Chinese in the current draft requires revision. On page 101 the framework implies that the only conflicts that arose during the Gold Rush were between miners of different ethnicities. Nothing is mentioned about the racial conflicts and social negotiations that newcomers faced throughout the state. Chinese were chased out of and excluded from many areas. The CA Foreign Miner's tax was primarily directed at Chinese. Los Angeles had a Chinese Massacre in 1871, in which 18 Chinese were lynched/murdered. In fact, the Chinese were not allowed to testify in court, under an 1854 CA Supreme Court ruling (*People v. Hall*). Accordingly, more must be said about the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Until that legislation, which was in effect for 60 years, the Chinese were the main Asian group in the U.S. In the current draft of the Framework, all of the Asian groups are listed as if their numbers were equal during the Nineteenth Century.[Chapter 7, page 101, lines 389-392]

In addition, the role of the Chinese in the growth of California and the West must be included in the Fourth Grade curriculum. A glaring omission is the fact that the Chinese were important railroad builders, but also did much more. At the completion of the transcontinental railroad California prospered tremendously due to the many travelers from the Eastern United States and to increased commercial traffic, transporting California products eastward for sale. Chinese also built levees in the Sacramento Delta region. Due to the levees, agriculture flourished in this area and California became the top agricultural state in the nation. The fact that

Chinese were important road builders should also be included. Chinese workers built roads to remote mining and logging areas, and to new scenic parks and natural areas such as in what is now Yosemite National Park. [Chapter 7, pages 106-107]

Our concerns in the Eighth grade curriculum include the limited discussion about California and the Western region of the United States. On page 345, the discussion of its diversity only includes a listing of the various ethnic groups. No details are given. On Page 365, the summarizing phrase *“immigrants played an essential role in developing the country as both an agricultural and industrial giant”* does not emphasize enough, and does not elaborate enough, on how California became one of the world’s largest economies partly due to the labor contributions of immigrants, including Chinese. [Chapter 12 Grade 8 Pages 345, 365, and others]

Some important omissions were noted in the high school Framework.

First, on page 468, the discussion of how the war was mobilized on different fronts did not include what was done on the home front. A high percentage of Chinese Americans, higher than the national average, joined the war effort, at home and overseas. Chinese Americans took “Rosie the Riveter” jobs in shipyards and warplane factories. On the front line, many young Chinese Americans volunteered to be soldiers, pilots, and navigators, or to provide support services, such as with the air service groups that supported the Flying Tigers and the establishment of the Burma Road that opened a strategic new war front. As stated in the Framework, many took jobs that heretofore had been unavailable to them. [Chapter 15 Grade 11 Page 468 Line 903]

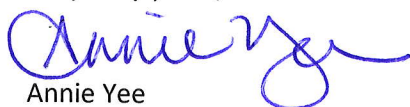
Another omission was the failure to include mention of the Supreme Court decision, *Lau v. Nichols*. The decision on a lawsuit brought by a Chinese family in San Francisco continues to impact how second language learners are taught. [Chapter 16] The omission of *Lau v. Nichols* is especially glaring when there is considerable discussion in the Framework about how to present content to English learners (ELs).

On page 511 the statement that migration was restricted from the “Western” hemisphere is confusing since the example presented is the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed by the U.S. Congress. That act was race-based and attempted to exclude immigration from all hemispheres. In that same section there is no mention of either Angel Island or Ellis Island. Both are important in a discussion of U.S. limitations on and the frequently unequal policies toward immigration. [Chapter 16 Page 511 Line 192]

In the Grade 11 curriculum, women social reformers in the East such as Jane Addams are mentioned. However, for California, the work of women such as Margaret Culbertson and Donaldina Cameron, who rescued Chinese girls from prostitution and slavery and established homes for not only rescued girls but also for those who were poor or unwanted, should be discussed. [Chapter 16 Page 516 Line 240]

In conclusion, while we appreciate the considerable effort that has gone into the preparation and editing of the draft Framework already, due to the sheer size of the Framework, the complex goals and strategies embedded within, and the vast constituency that the Framework will serve, it is recommended that additional time be given and additional outreach be conducted for a final phase of public review before the document is adopted and its strategies are implemented. We focused more on content in this review, but we recognize that local implementation requires more consideration for local relevance. Therefore, we recommend providing the appropriate amount of time for final review before the Framework is adopted.

Very truly yours,



Annie Yee  
President